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THE CONFLICT OF EAST AND WEST IN EGYPT.

III.

The Sûdan and the Mahdi.

THE SÛDAN comprises the vast region lying between the equator and the southern boundary of Egypt at the first cataract of the Nile, and extending from the Red Sea and Abyssinia on the east to a western indefiniteness — to the point, one might say, from which a slave could be carried to the Nile with some chance of profit for the slave-hunter. Since the day of Mehemet Ali, the country had been to Egypt very much what Egypt was to Turkey before the day of the great pasha. Mehemet Ali appropriated the Sûdan to himself with that free-handed robbery that was characteristic of power in the time of feudalism, and his successors, excepting perhaps Said, did all they could to keep up the system of robbery and spoliation that he had begun. On the other hand, the chiefs of the native tribes did all they could to resist the power of Egypt, often even to the point of bloodshed and murder; or paid their enforced tributes unwillingly and only after these had been diminished by all possible peculations. There was an extensive inland commerce in the Sûdan that made it a valuable province. The yield of ivory, ostrich feathers, grains, and tropical fruits was very large; but the traffic in slaves was the great industry of the country. The Sûdan supplied the slave markets of the Eastern world. It was this feature of commerce that first attracted the attention of the West to the Sûdan. It was the motive of mercy that encouraged the interference of civilized people.

Ismail, with all the ambition of Mehemet Ali, was ready to listen to any plans for increasing his authority, especially if they were suggested by Europeans. He had long entertained

a scheme of aggrandizement in the Sûdan ; and he fancied that expeditions to suppress the slave-trade, if organized in his name, would somehow secure the extension of his power. It may be doubted if he appreciated the humanitarian motives that suggested to Englishmen the necessity of such an expedition as Sir Samuel W. Baker was deputed to lead in 1869 ; but he gave Sir Samuel his hearty co-operation, and appointed him governor-general of the entire region south of Gondokoro. Several years before that time Ismail had reasserted Egypt's authority, which had been suffered to lapse through the inactivity of Said and the opposition of the Sûdanese, by an extension of his dominion to the west in the conquest of Darfûr ; and now he was glad to have his governor-general push on to the south. The story of Sir Samuel's attempt to reach his province, and of his success in abolishing the slave-traffic only for the time that the slave-posts were under his eye, is told in his own book, *Ismailia*. It is enough to state here that, despite his strenuous and most worthy efforts, he made no permanent impression upon the trade he sought to wipe out ; on the contrary, by his opposition to the most influential men of the Sûdan, the slave-traders, he brought Egypt into greater odium than before, and increased the hatred that had always been felt for Egyptian rule.

The successor of Sir Samuel Baker was Colonel Charles George Gordon, familiarly known as "Chinese Gordon" from his remarkable career in the suppression of the Tai-ping rebellion in China. He was, perhaps, the most humane man in England ; but his character was as firm as it was sweet, and his courage was as great as his pity. Of the man whose name has been for years a household word among the civilized and the heathen, whose feats have won the admiration of the world, and whose charities have been the inspiration of the rich and the comfort of the poor, further characterization is needless. Suffice it to say that Gordon had the qualities that fitted him pre-eminently for the work he undertook when, in 1874, he started upon his mission to the Sûdan. He did not give Ismail credit for much philanthropy ; for, before he left Cairo for Khartûm, he wrote to England :

I think I can see the true motive of the expedition, and believe it to be a sham to catch the attention of the English people : and feel like a Gordon who has been humbugged.¹

Going to the Equatorial Province, however, solely on the authority of Ismail, he did not question the latter's motives too closely, but applied himself to the work of the expedition. He was to establish a series of posts between Khartûm and Gondokoro and to suppress the slave-trade. In eighteen months Gordon returned to Cairo and resigned his commission under the khédivé. This is what he had done at that time :

He had mapped the White Nile from Khartûm to within a short distance of the Victoria Nyanza. He had given to the slave-trade on the White Nile a deadly blow. He had restored confidence and peace among the tribes of the Nile valley, so that they now freely brought into the stations their beef, corn, and ivory for sale. He had opened up the water communication between Gondokoro and the Lakes. He had established satisfactory relations with King M'tesa. He had formed Government districts, and established secure posts with safe communication between them. He had contributed a revenue to the Khédivial exchequer, and this without oppression. The Tai-ping Rebellion established Gordon's genius as a military commander ; the Equatorial Provinces, when he left them, testified not less to his genius as a philanthropic and practical administrator.²

Gordon resigned because Ismail Yakûb, the governor-general of the Sûdan, threw so many stumbling-blocks in his way. While he was doing all he could to suppress the slave-trade, Ismail Yakûb was doing all he could to foster it. At the beginning of 1877 the khédivé removed the latter, and wrote the following to Gordon (February 17) :

Setting a just value on your honorable character, on your zeal, and on the great services you have already done me, I have resolved to bring the Sûdan, Darfûr, and the provinces of the Equator, into one vast province, and place it under you as Governor-General.³

Gordon accepted the larger responsibilities and duties of the office bestowed upon him. For two years and more he

¹ Archibald Forbes, *Chinese Gordon*, p. 125. ² *Ibid.*, p. 157. ³ *Ibid.*, p. 159.

worked with indomitable energy in crushing the slave-traffic, in putting down insurrection, and in establishing his authority throughout the vast provinces nominally under his control. In spite of almost insuperable difficulties in the way of inadequate resources, both military¹ and financial, he accomplished wonders. If he had been content to remain at Khartûm after the fall of Ismail, the fame and fear of the False Prophet might never have been known in Egypt; but he was disgusted with the abdication, and insisted upon resigning, to the no small relief, probably, of the new khédive and his ministers, who were glad to be rid of all the servants of Ismail.

After Gordon left the Sûdan, in 1879, an Egyptian pasha was appointed governor-general, and the country relapsed into its former feeling of bitterness toward Egyptian rule. It was not long before the disaffection found its leader. He was no less a person than the Mahdi, whose coming had been foretold by the prophet Mohammed. He chose an opportune moment to act as the champion of his people. They had been incensed at the suppression of the slave-trade, they hated the Egyptian rule, and they believed that the fourteenth century of the Hegira, which was close at hand, would, in accordance with prophecy, usher in an era of unexampled prosperity and happiness.

Mehemet Ahmed, who called himself the Mahdi, was an obscure carpenter's son, who had studied religious creeds with one sect of dervishes in Khartûm and with another sect in Berber until 1870, when he became a *fakir*, or dervish-chief, himself. He then retired to the island of Abba, on the White Nile, where he became famed for his piety. He lived in a cave, and gave himself up to prayers, fastings, and mortifications of the flesh. He won a wide notoriety, and made many disciples. Rich gifts were bestowed upon him, and the neighboring sheikhs gladly gave him their daughters in marriage. His brotherhood in Khartûm heard of his devotion, wealth, and influence, and sent to him, early in 1881, a messenger to bid him arise, in answer to the call of God, and lead a great army.

¹ "The Sûdan had been well-nigh drained of troops for the support of the sultan in his war with Russia." *Ibid.*, p. 162.

Mehemet Ahmed took up the sword at once, and in May declared to the *fakirs* of the faith of the Shiites that he was the Imam Mahdi, the new Messiah who had come to lead new believers into the fold of Islam, and to annihilate all the infidels on the face of the earth. His declaration met with no denial among the Shiites, whose religious order was confined almost wholly to the Sûdan; but at Cairo, Constantinople, and Mecca, the report of a Mahdi was scoffed at. Where were the signs¹ and portents that should herald his coming?

But the Mahdi set about the establishment of "a universal equality, a universal law, a universal religion, and a community of goods,"² and swore that he would visit with death all who did not believe in and follow him. In August, Raûf Pasha, the governor-general of the Sûdan, became alarmed at the growing power of the False Prophet, — for such he had been declared by the ulemas of Constantinople and Cairo and the Grand Sherif of Mecca, the highest priest of Islam, — and he sent an army to crush him. But the Mahdi easily repulsed the Egyptian³ force, as he did also a stronger force sent against him at the end of 1881. In June, 1882, he fought his first great battle,

¹ "The greater signs, among which the coming of the Mahdi is reckoned, are seventeen in all, and it must be confessed that some at least among these seem unlikely to be, for the present, literally fulfilled. The sun must rise in the west; the beast must emerge from the earth near Mecca; the walls of Stambûl must fall by miracle before an invading foe; the *Messih ed 'Dejâl*, or 'Lying Anointed One,' marked K F R on his forehead, one-eyed, and riding from Irak on an ass, must lay waste the earth. The true Messiah (our Lord Jesus) must appear on the minaret at Damascus, must reign in Jerusalem, and defeat Gog and Magog, and slay ed Dejâl at the gate of Lydda. A massacre of the Jews, and invasion of Syria by the great giants (Gog and Magog), who are to drink dry the sea of Galilee, a smoke which shall fill the world, a relapse of Arabia into paganism, the discovery of hid treasures in the Euphrates, the destruction of the Kaaba by negroes, beasts and stones speaking with human voices, a fire of Yemen, a man of the sons of Kahtan wielding a rod, and an icy wind from Damascus which shall sweep away the souls of all who have faith as a grain of mustard-seed, and blow to heaven the Koran itself; these are the wonders which, together with the coming of the Mahdi, will prepare the way for the tremendous *Yûssr ed Dîn*, or final day of judgment." — C. R. Conder, *The Guide of Islam*, in *The Fortnightly Review*.

² A. Egmont Hake, *The Story of Chinese Gordon*, vol. ii., p. 24.

³ The government forces in the Sûdan were in large part made up of Egyptian soldiers, the Sûdanese soldiers being sent to Egypt in at least equal numbers. This exchange of military was held one of the chief grievances against Egyptian rule.

and won a brilliant victory. Abdel Kadir, who had succeeded Raûf Pasha as governor-general, sent out the strongest force he could muster; but it was overwhelmingly defeated by the Mahdi's fanatical followers. Not a commander escaped with his life, and nearly every Egyptian soldier perished. And now for a time the False Prophet had things pretty much his own way. Arabi's rebellion not only diverted attention from the Sûdan, but it drew largely upon the Sûdanese garrisons for troops to support the nationalist cause. The Mahdi became more and more aggressive, and his ranks and his coffers were continually filling. But, in attacking El Obeid, he was repulsed with heavy loss. He was beaten off only temporarily, however; for he soon returned and laid siege to the garrison, which was finally compelled to yield, January 15, 1883. The commander of the garrison and many of his subordinates saved their lives by taking service under the Mahdi's standard.

The news of the fall of Obeid reached Egypt about the beginning of February. The insurrection was sufficiently serious to demand the attention of the khédivé. Lord Dufferin, however, advised letting the Mahdi alone so long as he remained in Kordofan. But the Egyptian government determined upon an expedition, and entrusted its command to Colonel Hicks, a retired English officer. It was impossible, so soon after Arabi's rebellion, to send as strong a force as was desirable. The expedition consisted of eight English officers, 6000 infantry, 1000 irregulars, 500 cavalry, and a small force of artillery. The English government in no way sanctioned the undertaking, nor did they oppose it. Lord Granville gave Sir Edward Malet, the British consul at Cairo, positive orders not to offer any advice on the question. After the first engagement between Hicks and the rebels, April 9, in which the former achieved a brilliant success, Hicks made many appeals to Malet for reinforcements; but the latter merely passed them on to the Egyptian government without comment. As Mr. McCarthy puts it:

Though England had interfered in Egypt by force of arms to keep the Khédivé on his throne, though Cairo was occupied by English soldiers, though it was clearly in England's power, and in her right, to counsel

the Egyptian ministry as to the course they should pursue in the most difficult of all Egyptian questions, the ministry still affected to keep up the absurd pretense of exercising no influence upon the councils of Egypt.¹

England could not shirk her responsibility by keeping silent. She was bound in all honor to give her advice at least; and refusing, she failed of her just duty and obligations.²

The summer and rainy season of 1883 were passed by Hicks Pasha in Khartûm; but on the 9th of September he set out for El Obeid, the stronghold of the Mahdi. The story of his march and the details of the final tragedy will probably never be authentically told. The last bits of news were in the letters of Edmund O'Donovan to a London newspaper. He seems to have appreciated the dangers of the expedition. On September 23, he wrote to a friend:

It would be odd if the next intelligence from this part of the world told that I, too, had gone the way of all flesh. However, to die even out here, with a lance-head as big as a shovel through me, will meet my views better than the slow, gradual sinking into the grave which is the lot of so many. . . . You know I am by this time, after an experience of many years, pretty well accustomed to dangers of most kinds, even some *extra*. Yet I assure you I feel it terrible to face deadly peril far away from civilized ideas, and where no mercy is to be met with, in company with cravens that you expect to see run at every moment, and who will leave you behind to face the worst.

When this friend next heard of O'Donovan, he had "gone the way of all flesh."

The accepted account of the slaughter of Hicks Pasha's army of 11,000 men is that, having been treacherously led into an ambushade on the 1st or 2d of November, they fought for three days with the courage and hopelessness of that smaller band under Leonidas at Thermopylæ; then, overcome with heat,

¹ Justin McCarthy, *England under Gladstone*. ch. xv.

² "Why, then, it may be asked, did not the Liberal Government use its influence to prohibit General Hicks's useless expedition? The question very plausibly suggests English responsibility for the expedition, and the consequences, or supposed consequences of its failure." *English Policy in the Sûdan*, *British Quarterly Review*, July, 1884.

thirst, and fatigue, their ammunition gone, they fell where they had fought, before the fury of the Mahdi's hordes. All the Egyptians were massacred, and only one European is known to have escaped.

It was more than two weeks before the terrible news reached Khartûm and was telegraphed to Cairo. It would be difficult to say whether the panic was greater in Egypt or in the Sûdan. In the Sûdan, governors of provinces, at the report of the Mahdi's victory, declared their allegiance to the holy cause, and flocked to his capital with troops and treasure. Nothing succeeds like success. The vast region from Kordofan to the equator was kindled to a fanatical zeal. The route from Khartûm to Sûakim, on the Red Sea, was intercepted by a lieutenant of the Mahdi's. The grasp of the Mahdi seemed to be closing about Khartûm. Colonel de Coetlogen, with his slender garrison of 4000, could not hold that city before the sweep of the rebel forces. In Cairo the consternation was no greater over the defeat than over England's opposition to an expedition to crush the Mahdi. Lord Granville telegraphed to Sir Evelyn Baring, who was now the British representative in Egypt, that the government would lend neither English nor Indian troops to assist an expedition. He advised the abandonment of the Sûdan. But the khédive's ministers said that they could not give up the territory that belonged to the sultan, and of which Egypt was simply the guardian. While negotiations between England and Egypt were pending, the khédive's government decided to send a force to Sûakim to relieve the beleaguered Egyptian garrisons at Sinkat and Tokar, and open the route from the Red Sea to Berber, so as to allow the Egyptians in Khartûm a way of escape. The expedition was placed under the command of Baker Pasha.

But now, January 4, 1884, Mr. Gladstone's government expressed its advice more forcibly than a month before.

It is indispensable [wrote Lord Granville] that her Majesty's Government should, as long as the provisional occupation of the country by English troops continues, be assured that the advice which, after full consideration of the Egyptian Government, they may feel it their duty

to tender to the Khédive should be followed. It should be made clear to the Egyptian ministers and governors of the provinces that the responsibility which, for the time, rests on England, obliges her Majesty's Government to insist on the adoption of the policy which they recommend ; and that it will be necessary that those ministers and governors who do not follow this course should cease to hold their offices.

This was what Mr. McCarthy calls "interference with a vengeance."¹ It was the decisive, if tardy, assertion of authority. The note was equivalent to saying that, in future, England's will was to be the law of Egypt. From Downing Street the order was issued that the Sûdan must be abandoned, whereupon Sherif's ministry resigned. Nubar Pasha was called to his place ; and he telegraphed at once, of course at England's dictation, to Baker, at Sûakim, that he must prepare for evacuation.

But the question now presented itself: How should the evacuation be effected? The answer was furnished by the *Pall Mall Gazette*, of London. Its issue of January 9 contained the following suggestion :

At present it is obviously out of the question to send an army of relief to Colonel Coetlogen. Baker Pasha's force seems inadequate even to relieve Sinkat. In common with the ex-Khédive, of whom he speaks with remarkable cordiality, General Gordon deprecates the despatch of either Indian or English troops to the Sûdan. But if we have not an Egyptian army to employ in the service, and if we must not send an English force, what are we to do? There is only one thing that we can do. We cannot send a regiment to Khartûm, but we can send a man who, on more than one occasion, has proved himself more valuable in similar circumstances than an entire army. Why not send Chinese Gordon with full powers to Khartûm, to assume absolute control of the territory, to treat with the Mahdi, to relieve the garrisons, and do what can be done to save what can be saved from the wreck in the Sûdan? . . . No one can deny the urgent need in the midst of that hideous welter of confusion for the presence of such a man, with a born genius for command, an unexampled capacity in organizing "ever-victorious armies," and a perfect knowledge of the Sûdan and its people. Why not send him out with *carte blanche* to do the best that can be

¹ England Under Gladstone, ch. xv.

done? He may not be able single-handed to reduce that raging chaos to order, but the attempt is worth making, and if it is to be made, it will have to be made at once.

The popular feeling was found to be heartily in accord with this suggestion, and a clamor was immediately raised on all sides for the despatch of Gordon to the Sûdan. The British government, some weeks before, had offered to appoint an English officer to go to Khartûm and organize the evacuation; but the Egyptian ministry had not taken up the offer. Now, however, Nubar informed Sir Evelyn Baring that such an appointment would be accepted. The British government, therefore, at once communicated with Gordon, recalling him from Brussels on the 17th of January, where he had just arrived to receive the last instructions of the king of Belgium, before proceeding on an anti-slavery mission to the Congo. He returned to London that same day, and on the morning of the 18th was closeted with members of the English cabinet. On Saturday, the 19th, the London *Times* startled the world with the following announcement:

It will be a welcome surprise to the country to learn that General Gordon started last night, not for the Congo, but for Egypt. . . . He takes with him, as his military secretary, Lieutenant-Colonel Stewart, who was on duty at Khartûm so late as last year, and whose knowledge of the affairs of the Sûdan is second only to that of General Gordon himself. The immediate purpose of the General's mission is, we understand, to report on the military situation in the Sûdan, to provide in the best manner for the safety of the European population of Khartûm and of the Egyptian garrisons still in the country, as well as for the evacuation of the Sûdan with the exception of the seaboard. His appointment will be received by the country with a certain sense of relief, as showing that the Government has been willing to seek the best advice and to select the most competent agent for the development of its policy in the Sûdan.

The Mission of Gordon. Operations in the Eastern Sûdan.

England had now taken a firm stand. She largely increased her responsibilities by entrusting Gordon with the Sûdanese mission. She had been niggardly even with advice in the case

of Hicks, but she was ready to hazard all with Gordon. Her unquestionable responsibility will be proved by the following documents. The day that Gordon left London, Lord Granville gave him this note of instruction :

FOREIGN OFFICE, Jan. 18th, 1884.

Sir : — Her Majesty's Government are desirous that you should proceed at once to Egypt, to report to them on the military situation in the Sûdan and on the measures which it may be advisable to take for the security of the Egyptian garrisons still holding possession in that country, and for the safety of the European population in Khartûm. You are also desired to consider and report upon the best mode of effecting the evacuation of the interior of the Sûdan, and upon the manner in which the safety and the good administration by the Egyptian Government of the ports on the seacoast can best be secured. In connection with this subject, you should pay especial consideration to the question of the steps that may usefully be taken to counteract the stimulus which it is feared may possibly be given to the slave trade by the present insurrectionary movement and by the withdrawal of the Egyptian authority from the interior. You will be under the instructions of her Majesty's Agent and Consul-General at Cairo, through whom your reports to her Majesty's Government should be sent under flying seal. You will consider yourself authorized and instructed to perform such other duties as the Egyptian Government may desire to entrust to you, and as may be communicated to you by Sir E. Baring. You will be accompanied by Colonel Stewart, who will assist you in the duties thus confided to you. On your arrival in Egypt you will at once communicate with Sir E. Baring, who will arrange to meet you, and will settle with you whether you should proceed direct to Sûakim, or should go yourself or despatch Colonel Stewart to Khartûm, *via* the Nile.

I am, *etc.*,

GRANVILLE.

While Gordon was on his way to Egypt he wrote the following notes, explanatory of the above instructions, and developed in accordance with the views expressed at the conference on January 18. These notes were forwarded from Cairo to the Foreign Office at London.

I understand that her Majesty's Government have come to the irrevocable decision not to incur the very onerous duty of securing to the peoples of the Sûdan a just future government. That, as a consequence, her Majesty's Government have determined to restore to these peoples

their independence, and will no longer suffer the Egyptian Government to interfere with their affairs.

2. For this purpose her Majesty's Government have decided to send me to the Sûdan to arrange for the evacuation of these countries, and the safe removal of the Egyptian employés and troops.

3. Keeping paragraph 1 in view, *viz.*, that the evacuation of the Sûdan is irrevocably decided on, it will depend on circumstances in what way this is to be accomplished. My idea is that the restoration of the country should be made to the different petty Sultans who existed at the time of Mehemet Ali's conquest, and whose families still exist; that the Mahdi should be left altogether out of the calculation as regards the handing over the country; and that it should be optional with the Sultans to accept his supremacy or not. As these Sultans would probably not be likely to gain by accepting the Mahdi as their sovereign, it is probable that they will hold to their independent positions. Thus we should have two factors to deal with; namely, the petty Sultans asserting their several independence, and the Mahdi's party aiming at supremacy over them. To hand, therefore, over to the Mahdi the arsenals, *etc.*, would, I consider, be a mistake. They should be handed over to the Sultans of the states in which they are placed. The most difficult question is how and to whom to hand over the arsenals of Khartûm, Dongola, and Kassala, which towns have, so to say, no old standing families, Khartûm and Kassala having sprung up since Mehemet Ali's conquest. Probably it would be advisable to postpone any decision as to these towns till such time as the inhabitants have made known their opinion.

4. I have, in paragraph 3, proposed the transfer of the lands to the local Sultans, and stated my opinion that these will not accept the supremacy of the Mahdi. If this is agreed to and my supposition is correct as to their action, there can be but little doubt that, as far as he is able, the Mahdi will endeavor to assert his rule over them, and will be opposed to any evacuation of the Government employés and troops. My opinion of the Mahdi's force is, that the bulk of those who were with him at Obeid will refuse to cross the Nile, and that those who do so will not exceed 3000 or 4000 men; and also, that these will be composed principally of black troops who have deserted, and who, if offered fair terms, would come over to the Government side. In such a case, *viz.*, "Sultans accepting transfer of territory and refusing the supremacy of the Mahdi, and Mahdi's black troops coming over to the Government," resulting weakness of the Mahdi, what should be done should the Mahdi's adherents attack the evacuating columns? It cannot be supposed that these are to offer no resistance, and if in resisting they should obtain a success, it would be but reasonable to allow them to follow up the Mahdi

to such a position as would insure their future safe march. This is one of those difficult questions which our Government can hardly be expected to answer, but which may arise, and to which I would call attention. Paragraph 1 fixes irrevocably the decision of the Government, *viz.*, to evacuate the territory, and, of course, as far as possible, involves the avoidance of any fighting. I can therefore only say, that having in view paragraph 1, and seeing the difficulty of asking her Majesty's Government to give a decision or direction as to what should be done in certain cases, that I will carry out the evacuation as far as possible according to their wish to the best of my ability, and with avoidance, as far as possible, of all fighting. I would, however, hope that her Majesty's Government will give me their support and consideration, should I be unable to fulfil all their expectations.

5. Though it is out of my province to give any opinion as to the action of her Majesty's Government in leaving the Sûdan, still, I must say it would be an iniquity to reconquer these peoples, and then hand them back to the Egyptians without guarantees of future good government. It is evident that this we cannot secure without an inordinate expenditure of men and money. The Sûdan is a useless possession, ever was so, and ever will be so. Larger than Germany, France, and Spain together, and mostly barren, it cannot be governed except by a Dictator, who may be good or bad. If bad, he will cause constant revolts. No one who has ever lived in the Sûdan can escape the reflection: "What a useless possession is this land." Few men can stand its fearful monotony and deadly climate.

6. Said Pasha, the Viceroy before Ismail, went up to the Sûdan with Count F. de Lesseps. He was so discouraged and horrified at the misery of the people, that at Berber Count de Lesseps saw him throw his guns into the river, declaring that he would be no party to such oppression. It was only after the urgent solicitation of European consuls that he reconsidered his decision. Therefore, I think her Majesty's Government are fully justified in recommending the evacuation, inasmuch as the sacrifices necessary toward securing a good government would be far too onerous to admit of such an attempt being made. Indeed, one may say it is impracticable at any cost. Her Majesty's Government will now leave them as God has placed them; they are not forced to fight among themselves, and they will no longer be oppressed by men coming from lands so remote as Circassia, Kurdistan, and Anatolia.

Colonel Stewart, also, while on the way to Cairo, addressed some observations to the Foreign Office, of which the following is of some importance as showing Gordon's independence of

Egypt and direct dependence upon England as the authority of his actions :

I, of course, understand that General Gordon is going to the Sûdan with full powers to make all arrangements as to its evacuation, and that he is in no way to be interfered with by the Cairo Ministers ; also, that any suggestions or remarks that the Cairo Government would wish to make are to be made directly to him and her Majesty's Minister Plenipotentiary, and that no intrigues are to be permitted against his authority. Any other course would, I am persuaded, make his mission a failure.

While Gordon was in Cairo, Sir Evelyn Baring communicated to him the following additional instructions :

Lord Granville "authorized and instructed you to perform such duties as the Egyptian Government may desire to entrust to you, and as may be communicated to you by Sir E. Baring." I have now to indicate to you the views of the Egyptian Government on two of the points to which your special attention was directed by Lord Granville. These are, (1) the measures which it may be advisable to take for the security of the Egyptian garrisons still holding positions in the Sûdan, and for the safety of the European population in Khartûm ; (2) the best mode of effecting the evacuation of the interior of the Sûdan. These two points are intimately connected, and may conveniently be considered together. It is believed that the number of Europeans at Khartûm is very small, but it has been estimated by the local authorities that some 10,000 to 15,000 people will wish to move northward from Khartûm only when the Egyptian garrison is withdrawn. These people are native Christians, Egyptian employés, their wives and children, *etc.* The Government of his Highness the Khédive is earnestly solicitous that no effort should be spared to insure the retreat both of these people and of the Egyptian garrison without loss of life. As regards the most opportune time and the best method for effecting the retreat, whether of the garrison or of the civil populations, it is neither necessary nor desirable that you should receive detailed instructions. A short time ago the local authorities pressed strongly on the Egyptian Government the necessity for giving orders for an immediate retreat. Orders were accordingly given to commence at once the withdrawal of the civil population. No sooner, however, had these orders been issued than a telegram was received from the Sûdan, strongly urging that the orders for commencing the retreat should be delayed. Under these circumstances, and in view of the fact that the position at Khartûm is now represented

as being less critical for the moment than it was a short time ago, it was thought desirable to modify the orders for the immediate retreat of the civil population, and to await your arrival. You will bear in mind that the main end to be pursued is the evacuation of the Sûdan. This policy was adopted, after very full discussion, by the Egyptian Government, on the advice of her Majesty's Government. It meets with the full approval of his Highness the Khédive, and of the present Egyptian Ministry. I understand, also, that you entirely concur in the desirability of adopting this policy, and that you think it should on no account be changed. You consider that it may take a few months to carry it out with safety. You are further of opinion that "the restoration of the country should be made to the different petty Sultans who existed at the time of Mehemet Ali's conquest, and whose families still exist"; and that an endeavor should be made to form a confederation of those Sultans. In this view the Egyptian Government entirely concurs. It will, of course, be fully understood that the Egyptian troops are not to be kept in the Sûdan merely with the view to consolidating the power of the new rulers of the country. But the Egyptian Government has the fullest confidence in your judgment, your knowledge of the country, and of your comprehension of the general line of policy to be pursued. You are, therefore, given full discretionary power to retain the troops for such reasonable period as you may think necessary, in order that the abandonment of the country may be accomplished with the least possible risk of life and property. A credit of £100,000 has been opened for you at the Finance Department, and further funds will be supplied to you on your requisition when this sum is exhausted. In undertaking the difficult task which now lies before you, you may feel assured that no effort will be wanting on the part of the Cairo authorities, whether English or Egyptians, to afford you all the co-operation and support in their power.

On the 26th of January, General Gordon, Colonel Stewart, and the newly-appointed sultan of Darfûr,¹ with no escort beyond their personal attendants, left Cairo for Khartûm, by way of Siût, Assûan, Wady Halfa, Abû Hamed, and Berber.

While this daring party was hastening toward Khartûm as swiftly as railway, steamer, and camel could carry them, events of a portentous nature were occurring elsewhere. On the 5th of February the British Parliament was opened, and on the

¹ The khédive had reinstated the heir to the sultanhip, who was a captive in Cairo, as the first step toward carrying out Gordon's policy.

same day the news was received in London that Baker Pasha had been defeated near Tokar, with a loss of 2000 men, and had fallen back with the remainder of his army — some 1200 — on Trinkitat, himself escaping death by a reckless dash through the Arab ranks. Osman Digna, the Mahdi's lieutenant, had carried all before him. Trinkitat could not hold out against him, and fears were entertained even for Sûakim, although Admiral Hewett had just landed a force there. These were not favorable auspices for the opening of Parliament. The customary placid language of the Queen's speech was strangely at variance with the feelings of those who listened to it. A vote of censure upon the government was at once moved, but it was rejected in the form offered, and the subject was postponed for a few days. In the meantime public opinion on the necessity of active interference and responsibility had strengthened to the point of insistence. The London *Times* voiced the widespread sentiment in saying :

This fatuous effort to evade the grasp of facts must now be abandoned, and even with respect to the past the world will be obstinately incredulous. Not only in Europe, as may be seen from the strong language used by the French press, but among the Mahomedan populations of the East, England is held to be responsible for the expeditions of Hicks Pasha and Baker Pasha not less than for the mission of General Gordon.¹

The excitement caused by the news of Baker's defeat was further increased by the report of the slaughter of the Sinkat garrison. Baker's expedition had utterly failed in the offensive. The vote of censure came on the 12th. The identical motion was offered in the upper House by Lord Salisbury, and in the lower House by Sir Stafford Northcote :

That this House, having read and considered the correspondence relating to Egypt, laid on the table by her Majesty's command, is of opinion that the recent lamentable events in the Sûdan are due, in a great measure, to the vacillating and inconsistent policy pursued by her Majesty's Government.

¹ *The Times*, February 7, 1884.

The motion was carried against the government by one hundred majority in the House of Lords, but it was lost in the House of Commons, where Mr. Gladstone made an ingenious defence of his policy of non-intervention, and of his claim of irresponsibility for the slaughter of the Hicks and the defeat of the Baker expedition. Relief had not been sent to Sinkat, because it was believed that such a move would endanger the lives of Gordon and those whom he had been sent to rescue, and the chief desire of her Majesty's government was to secure the evacuation, the peaceful evacuation, of the interior of the Sûdan. England was the guardian of Egyptian interests, and the welfare of the land demanded that Gordon's mission should be successfully executed. "For," said Mr. Gladstone, "I look upon the possession of the Sûdan — I won't say as a crime — that would be going a great deal too far — but I look upon it as the calamity of Egypt. It has been a drain on her treasury, it has been a drain on her men." The government was saved in the Commons by a majority of forty-nine.

In spite, now, of the reasons assigned for not having rescued the garrison of Sinkat, the English government authorized the despatch of General Graham for the relief of Tokar, Admiral Hewett having already, with English sanction, assumed the general command of forces at Sûakim. Before Graham had landed his force at Trinkitat, however, Tokar had succumbed, the greater part of the garrison joining the standard of Osman Digna. On the last day of February, Graham marched forth and met and overcame the intrepid lieutenant of the Mahdi on the field where Baker's force had been defeated. This success was followed up by further advances, and on March 13 a decisive victory was won. The backbone of the Mahdi's power in the eastern Sûdan seemed broken. But at this junction General Graham was ordered to embark his troops and leave the seat of war at once. This was a fatal order. Then was the time, Osman's forces having been beaten and scattered, to open the route from Sûakim to Berber, and afford an egress for the garrisons of the interior. The opportunity was missed and never was presented again. Osman gathered together his

forces, strengthened his power at his leisure, and held himself in readiness to carry out his old threat of sweeping Sûakim and every soul it contained into the Red Sea.

Gordon at Khartûm, and the Government in London.

We left General Gordon on his way to Khartûm. He arrived there on February 18. At Berber he had issued a proclamation declaring the purpose and policy of his mission. He had come to establish tranquillity and prevent the shedding of Moslem blood; to secure to the inhabitants their rights of property, and put an end to injustice and oppression. He reduced the taxes one-half, and wiped off all arrearages. He conferred upon the people the right, of which they had been deprived at the expense of time, treasure, and blood, to hold slaves as property, with full control over their services. He guaranteed them the privileges they enjoyed under Said Pasha, and promised prosperity and happiness. In consequence of this proclamation Gordon's journey from Berber to Khartûm was a triumphal march. The natives flocked to bless him as their king and deliverer, and he was received at Khartûm with cries of rejoicing. His proclamation had a very different effect in the outside world. European nations stood aghast. Gordon, the arch enemy of the slave-trade, declared himself its friend! England received the news with consternation and horror. Every Wilberforce of the nation raised his voice of protest. The clamor precipitated a second vote of censure, which was offered by M. Labouchere on March 15, the ground of censure, however, being nominally the useless waste of life in the operations about Sûakim. The government barely escaped defeat, the majority being only seventeen. The criticism on General Gordon for his slave-trade proclamation was as blind as his policy was far-sighted. He had been sent to secure the evacuation of the Sûdan, after which every sane man knew the country would return to its old traffic; for Gordon could scarcely be expected to say: We are to withdraw, but you are to frown upon the slave-trade just as though we were here to compel

you. The peaceful evacuation, Gordon well knew, could only be secured by conciliation, and the best favors to grant were those the people were bound to gain. The wisdom of his proclamation needed no further proof than the excessive friendliness of the greetings along his march and of his reception at Khartûm.

Gordon devoted his first day in Khartûm to acts of mercy. He said to the people: "I come without soldiers, but with God on my side, to redress the evils of this land. I will not fight with any weapons but justice." He won the hearts of all at once by burning the government books and all instruments of torment and torture, by releasing the unjustly imprisoned, and by devoting himself personally to the sick and the wronged. That first day, also, he sent a despatch to Sir Evelyn Baring, saying that it would be folly to leave the Sûdan unless some one were to take his place as governor-general. Anarchy and misery would surely ensue. He named Zubair Pasha¹ as the one above all others to select for the position. "He alone," he wrote, "has the ability to rule the Sûdan, and would be universally accepted by the Sûdan." Sir Evelyn Baring forwarded the suggestion the next day to Earl Granville, and heartily urged its adoption, believing, as he said, that Zubair was the only possible man.

It had been supposed, and, in fact, General Gordon himself had so understood it, that he was to have the dictatorial power in the Sûdan that the crisis demanded. The English government, however, immediately repelled the notion of appointing old slave-trading Zubair governor-general. A long series of telegrams passed between Gordon, Baring, and Granville on the subject. Gordon besought and Baring expostulated; but the government was blind to all reason — to everything but the fear of a renewal of the slave-trade, which, in point of fact, was assured the day the evacuation of the Sûdan was decided upon.

¹ Zubair had had great power in the Sûdan, where he was king of the slave-traders. He was, at this time, confined in Cairo, his captivity being lightened by a liberal allowance. Zubair was supposed to bear an undying grudge against Gordon, because Gordon had killed his (Zubair's) son in the Sûdan during a previous campaign.

General Gordon afterward reduced the government's reasoning on this point to a simple form :¹ "I will not send up A., because he will do this ; but I will leave the country to B., who will do exactly the same." Baring telegraphed to Granville (March 9) :

As regards slavery, it may certainly receive a stimulus from the abandonment of the Sûdan by Egypt ; but the despatch of Zubair Pasha to Khartûm will not affect the question one way or the other. No middle course is possible so far as the Sûdan is concerned. We must either virtually annex the country, which is out of the question, or else we must accept the inevitable consequences of abandonment.

But the British government wished to abandon the Sûdan, and yet avoid the "inevitable consequences." Gordon maintained that to prevent anarchy it was necessary to "smash up" the Mahdi, and that Zubair was the only one who had enough influence and prestige of family to do it. Gordon could not bear the thought of leaving the Sûdan to ruin. He sent, March 8, a further argument, that should have had some weight with the government : "If you do not send Zubair, you have no chance of getting the garrisons away ; this is a heavy argument in favor of sending him."

But it was no use. On March 28, Earl Granville sent a long note to Sir Evelyn Baring, in which he reviewed the discussion at length, and even rehearsed the slavery antecedents of Zubair. It is impossible, after all the months that have intervened since that note was written, to read it dispassionately. Granville wrote :

Her Majesty's Government, on the perusal of General Gordon's advice, were under the impression that he gave undue weight to the assumed necessity of an immediate evacuation of Khartûm, and they inquired whether it was urgent to make an arrangement at once to provide for his successor, expressing a hope that General Gordon would remain for some time.

In other words, her Majesty's government thought that the "necessity of an immediate evacuation" could be more judiciously determined in Downing Street than in Khartûm. The

¹ General Gordon's Journal, p. 42. (September 17.)

question could be decided certainly more safely. It is not necessary to go through Lord Granville's note in detail. The vain desire is clearly manifest throughout, that Gordon should not *abandon* the Sûdan in *evacuating*. Gordon said that he could pursue but one course; Granville denied him that, but suggested no alternative. "Let Gordon stay a while: the government will deliberate. So far as is known, he is not in any immediate danger at Khartûm. We will not let Zubair leave Cairo." That was the gist of the note. A week later, Mr. Gladstone naïvely remarked that General Gordon could leave Khartûm "at any time if he felt so disposed." Little did he know the fibre of the man's honor if he thought he could, under any conditions, "feel disposed" to desert the garrisons he had been sent to rescue. He felt that the lives of some 29,000 persons, composing the garrisons at Bahr Ghazelle, Sennar, Kassala, Khartûm, Shendy, Berber, Abû Hamed, and Dongola were in his hands. He would not be false to his trust.

The story of Gordon's government at Khartûm, of his dealings with the people, of his sorties against the threatening forces of the Mahdi, and of his untiring zeal and dauntless personal courage, is told in his own journals¹ and despatches to Sir Evelyn Baring, and in the letters of Mr. Power, the correspondent of the *London Times*. Our concern is less with those details than with the relations existing between Gordon and the British government. The Egyptian government quite drops out of notice, all negotiations proceeding independently of the khédive.

From first to last, so long as communication was kept up with Gordon, the British government pursued a policy of opposition to his proposals. His long-continued and persistent calls for Zubair were disregarded. He desired permission to proceed to El Obeid for a peaceful negotiation with the Mahdi, whom

¹ A large and very valuable part of Gordon's journals was lost when Colonel Stewart's party was massacred, in September, 1884. Gordon had entrusted them to that officer, believing that they would be safer than if kept by himself, in Khartûm. Stewart's journals, which Gordon considered very valuable, were lost at the same time. *Vide seq.*

he appointed sultan¹ of Kordofan ; but he was told to remain at Khartûm. He said that Berber should be relieved, and that the route from Sûakim to Berber should be kept open ; instead of this, the British troops were withdrawn from the Red Sea littoral. He desired that Turkish troops should be sent there ; but this proposal was vetoed, presumably on diplomatic grounds. He wished to go from Khartûm to Bahr Ghazelle and the Equatorial Provinces ; but he was told again not to proceed beyond Khartûm. He begged that troops be sent to Wady Halfa and Assûan ; but the request was refused. Later he urged the necessity of a British diversion at Berber ; but his plea was not heeded. Was it not strange that the English government should have sent Gordon to the Sûdan with the explicit understanding that his judgment should determine the means and methods of evacuation, and then never, in any essential particular, follow his advice ? The world called it almost a crime. Early in April, Gordon sent an undated message to Sir Evelyn Baring, containing the following words :

As far as I can understand, the situation is this : You state your intention of not sending any relief up here or to Berber, and you refuse me Zubair. I consider myself free to act according to circumstances. I shall hold on here as long as I can ; and if I can suppress the rebellion, I shall do so. If I cannot, I shall retire to the Equator ; and leave you the indelible disgrace of abandoning the garrisons of Sennar, Kassala, Berber, and Dongola, with the certainty that you will, eventually, be forced to smash up the Mahdi under great difficulties, if you would retain peace in Egypt.

As Mr. Hake says : "The breach was complete. The great soldier declined to serve as an instrument of dishonor."²

In England the bitterest criticism was heaped upon Mr. Gladstone. The Liberals in Parliament became hostile to their own government. On the 12th of May a third vote of censure was proposed, in which the government was charged with indifference to the success of Gordon's mission and the safety of his

¹ The appointment was scornfully rejected by the Mahdi, who sent dervishes to Gordon, ordering him to embrace the Moslem faith.

² The Story of Chinese Gordon, vol. ii., p. 166.

person. Again the government escaped, but with the small majority of 28 in 578 votes cast. The result would probably have been fatal to Mr. Gladstone, if the vote had been postponed for a month. Then his government would have been held responsible for the fall of Berber and the terrible massacre that occurred there on June 2. A fourth vote might have been proposed, had not a different phase of the Egyptian trouble been forced upon Parliament for consideration before the news was received.

As always, the finances of Egypt were in a bad way. For three years the deficits of the treasury had been accumulating, till they amounted to something over £8,000,000. The indemnities for losses sustained in the bombardment, burning, and pillage of Alexandria made about half of this sum; and the expenditures for the military constituted the chief item in the remaining half. The British government desired to meet the deficit by a new loan; but, as this could not be done without conflicting with the law of liquidation, it was decided to summon to a conference those Powers that had agreed to the establishment of the law. Accordingly, on the 19th of April, Lord Granville sent an identical note to the great Powers, inviting them to a conference in London, to consider whether a modification of the laws of liquidation would not be for the financial interest of Egypt. Germany, Austria, Russia, and Italy accepted the invitation at once; but France, with something of her old-time jealousy, objected to a conference that could not consider the political as well as the financial question. Lord Granville, however, was firm in his insistence upon the limitation, so far as the conference was concerned; but he entered into a diplomatic correspondence with M. Waddington. The result of the exchange of views, or, as it was called, "the Anglo-French agreement," was submitted to Parliament by Mr. Gladstone before the conference met. France resigned all claim of control in Egypt, and agreed never to land troops in the Delta without the consent of England. On the other hand, England agreed to withdraw her military forces from Egypt before the first day of January, 1888, unless the Powers should

request the contrary. In the meantime she was to prepare a scheme for the neutralization of Egypt, which should be submitted to the Powers. The *Caisse de la Dette Publique*, it was agreed, should be placed under the multiple direction of the Powers. But all these arrangements, as Mr. Gladstone said, were dependent upon the will of the conference, which, in turn, should be binding upon England according as Parliament, by its votes, determined.

England being thus carefully guarded behind two big *ifs*, the Conference met in London on June 28. Its progress was slow, and as it failed of its purpose ultimately, its details need not be given. The Powers so hopelessly disagreed that the Conference was dissolved on the 2d of August. France, the leader of the opposition to England, could not secure the formulation of a future policy. As a last straw she endeavored to obtain an adjournment of the Conference till October, but, instead, it was adjourned *sine die*; and thus, all participation in the affairs of Egypt was lost to her. This was practically accomplished by her withdrawal from a joint supervision at the time of Arabi's rebellion; but now, for the first time, her position of looker-on was determined. Germany seemed satisfied with having egged on France to a point where the refusal of her demands would only increase the growing coolness between the British and French governments. Turkey, of course, had found no following in urging her rights and ability to control Egypt without the help of Eastern Powers. Italy, the only pronounced ally of England in the Conference, retired with the distinction that this alliance had brought upon her, and accepted, as her share of the "spoils" the thanks which Sir John Saville Lumley, British Minister to Italy, was instructed to bestow upon her for the support which she gave to the British proposals in the Conference.

The glory of the collapse of the Conference, if there were any, fell to England. It was demonstrated that the Powers could not control Egypt in unison; it was left to England to do the work alone and to earn the praise or the blame. The financial question remaining still unsettled, the government commis-

sioned Lord Northbrook to go to Egypt and investigate the "condition of affairs so as to advise the English government as to what counsel should be given to the Egyptian government in the present circumstances." Of course it was understood that the "counsel" would be of a more peremptory character than advice usually is; for counsel and command to the khédive have long been regarded in England as one and the same thing. The High Commission found the finances of Egypt in such a muddle that one of two courses seemed inevitable: to make a declaration of bankruptcy with a reduction of the coupons, or to turn the revenues temporarily from the sinking fund for the redemption of the certified debt into the Egyptian treasury. The latter alternative was chosen, and wisely, as it seems, although it was a breach of the law of liquidation. Lord Northbrook held that, if the tribute to Turkey and the expenses of the government could be met for a time, and if the revenues should afterward revert to the sinking fund, the coupon-holders would lose less than by a declaration of bankruptcy. By the decree of the khédive, September 18, the law of liquidation was suspended for six weeks. This called forth the united remonstrance of the Powers. The plan, however, was persisted in.

General Gordon, meanwhile, seemed to have dropped completely out of mind. No word had been received from him since May. By the fall of Berber telegraphic communications had been cut off, and only the vaguest rumors from any point south of Dongola made their way to Cairo. At the eleventh hour there had been a pretence of opening the route from Sûakim to Berber by sending a railway plant to Sûakim. Desultory despatches of the progress in its construction and of skirmishes with Osman Digna were received during the summer; but no one was surprised that the work was discontinued before autumn. This railway scheme was perhaps less of a farce than the Khédive Ismail's projected railway from Wady Halfa south to Hanneck; for Ismail left his plant to be covered by the sweeping sands of the Nubian desert, while the English carried theirs off to India. In order to divert attention from

the Berber massacre, the success of Admiral Hewett's mission to King John of Abyssinia, the news of which had been received at about the same time, had been somewhat magnified. He secured, by treaty, access to a third route to Khartûm from Massowah through Abyssinia. The sequel has shown how valueless the concession was. But the attention of England had been very generally diverted from Egypt altogether. The Franchise Bill at home had been the absorbing topic during the early summer. There had, however, been many rumors afloat of an expedition to be sent to the relief of General Gordon. But the weeks had drifted by, and July, the month first named for the despatch of the expedition, was past before any active preparations were made. These were begun in August by the vote of a credit of £300,000 to defray expenses. It seemed, finally, as if the conscience of the government were quickened.

Wolseley's Expedition. Conclusion.

The command of the relief expedition was entrusted to Lord Wolseley, the Sir Garnet Wolseley who had suppressed Arabi's rebellion, and thereby won for himself elevation to the peerage. At first Lord Wolseley had been asked simply to draw up the plans of the expedition; but as General Stephenson, the commander of the forces in Egypt, had not approved the scheme, Wolseley was called upon to assume the command himself. At his suggestion the government had decided upon the Nile route in opposition to the very generally expressed advice of the most competent authorities, among whom was General Stephenson. The latter favored the route from Sûakim to Berber as the most direct and the shortest. If an advance of only ten miles a day were made, this journey could be accomplished within a month. The objections to this route were the lack of water, and the certainty that Osman Digna would dispute every inch of the way. They were formidable objections certainly, but not insuperable. The route would have been far preferable to the one decided upon, on account of the great saving in time.

There was still another route than the one chosen that seems never to have been considered, although it has always been the beaten way from Cairo to Khartûm. It coincides with the route Wolseley preferred, except that instead of making the long journey through the horse-shoe bend of the Nile, south of Wady Halfa, where the river is impassable to large craft on account of the cataracts, it strikes off across the Nubian desert from Korosko to Abû Hamed, the points that represent the heel of the shoe. The desert journey is accomplished in about six days, the distance being two hundred and thirty miles, or somewhat less than the distance from Sûakim to Berber. The route is not altogether pleasant, as the line of skeletons of men and beasts who have perished on the way testifies; but there is a well at the midway station, and a flying column could have carried enough water along with it. In spite, however, of the greater disadvantages of the circuitous route, Wolseley decided to stick to the river.

The commander arrived in Egypt on the 8th of September, and began to make elaborate and tedious preparations. His force was to consist of ten thousand men. To transport them he had determined to employ Canadian boatmen, and to use small boats similar to those he had used in a Canadian expedition which he had commanded on the Red River some years before. The boats and boatmen were not ready before the end of September, when more than a month of high water had already been lost. If the expedition had started in July, as originally suggested, even steamers of light draft might have been towed up the cataracts, which, it must be remembered, are nothing more than long stretches of whirlpools and eddies that scarcely roar or rush as they wind in and out and around the thousand and one rocky islets. After the middle of August, when the Nile began to fall, every day passed was a precious day lost.

An impulse was given to the work at the end of September. A voice from the desert was heard that had been stilled for months. It had all of its old ring. "I am awaiting the British forces," wrote Gordon, "in order to evacuate the

Egyptian garrisons." His purpose had not changed since the day he started for the Sûdan. On the 29th of September, Mr. Power's journal of events in Khartûm, from the first of May to the end of July, was given in the London *Times*. It was a thrilling story. The indignation that the following extract aroused was intense :

Since the despatch which arrived the day before yesterday [July 29], all hope of relief by our government is at an end ; so when our provisions, which we have at a stretch for two months, are eaten, we must fall ; nor is there any chance, with the soldiers we have, and the great crowd of women, children, *etc.*, of our being able to cut our way through the Arabs. We have not steamers for all, and it is only from the steamers we can meet the rebels.

The two months were past : had the garrison already fallen ? Early in October further news was received contained in a series of despatches sent by General Gordon to Massowah. None of them, however, bore a later date than Power's message to the *Times*. In one of them (July 31) Gordon writes :

Reading over your telegram of the 5th May, 1884, you ask me to state cause and intention in staying at Khartûm, knowing Government means to abandon Sûdan, and in answer I say, I stay at Khartûm because Arabs have shut us up, and will not let us out.

Again and again Gordon referred in his journal to the impertinence of the above request : State your reasons ! "The '*reasons*' are those horribly plucky Arabs." ¹

The immediate result of these despatches was that all eyes were turned upon Lord Wolseley. The criticism of his movements was less than the impatience at his delays. In the government's letter of instructions, dated October 8, he was informed that the primary object of his expedition was the rescue of General Gordon ² and Colonel Stewart. He was not to go

¹ Journal, p. 53. (September 19.)

² Gordon's view of the relief expedition is interesting in this connection. He wrote in his journals (September 24) : "I altogether *decline* the imputation that the projected expedition has come to *relieve me*. It has come to *SAVE OUR NATIONAL HONOR in extricating the garrisons, etc., from a position in which our action in Egypt has placed these garrisons*. I was relief expedition No. 1. They are relief expedition No. 2. . . . I am not the *rescued lamb*, and I will not be." The italics are his.

farther south than Dongola, unless it became actually necessary ; and, in no case, was he to proceed beyond Khartûm, not even to relieve the garrison at Sennar. Such instructions were scarcely calculated to arouse Lord Wolseley to the activity that the purpose of his expedition required. Gordon had said that he could not leave Khartûm, and yet the government talked about rescuing him at a point midway between that city and Wady Halfa. The general who had stilled the cry of "Egypt for the Egyptians" with a skill and promptness that called forth the applause of the world, seemed to have assumed now a character quite in keeping with the desires of his government. They had been slow and irresolute in all their relations with the Sûdan. Each step was taken only when the irresistible force of public opinion compelled. By keeping just behind the public demand and the necessities of the moment, the government had acted always just too late. General Gordon gives a good instance of this failing in his journals :

Take the Tokar business : had Baker been supported, say, by 500 men, he would not have been defeated ; yet, after he was defeated, you go and send a force to relieve the town. Had Baker been supported by these 500 men, he would, in all probability, have been victorious, and would have pushed on to Berber ; and, once there, Berber would not have fallen. What was right to do in *March*, was right to do in *February*. We sent an expedition in March, so we ought to have sent it in February ; and then the worst of it was that, Baker having been defeated, *when you did send your expedition to Tokar*, Baker's force no longer existed, and his guns resist me at Berber. It is truly deplorable, the waste of men and money, on account of our indecision.¹

The advance of the Nile force was lamentably slow. By the 20th of November there were only 3,000 troops, out of some 16,000 in Egypt, that had passed Wady Halfa. Within the next three weeks, however, the 10,000 troops composing the expeditionary force were all south of Korosko. It seemed as though Lord Wolseley were preparing to write a book on "My Winter on the Nile." He would have had the advantage of the thousand and one tourists who have written under the above title, in that he pushed beyond the usual limit at the first cata-

¹ Gordon's Journals, p. 151. (October 8.)

ract, and maintained a progress that all might envy, who have enjoyed the motionlessness of the dahabîeh. A description of a Nile journey is nothing unless it dwells upon the laziness, the idleness, the donothingness of the life.

In the meantime the news of another horror had been received from the Sûdan. On the 10th of September, General Gordon had sent Colonel Stewart down the Nile in command of an expedition against Berber. He considered it important that the rebel fortifications there should be destroyed, thus enabling Stewart to open communication with the expedition of relief, concerning whose movements Gordon was very much in the dark. It is also hinted that Gordon wished, by this method, to save the life of his brave lieutenant.¹ Before the fall of Berber he had sent down into Egypt more than six hundred soldiers and two thousand people; but this was the first attempt since then to add to the number. Stewart succeeded in demolishing the Berber fortifications, and then, with Power, the *Times* correspondent, and about forty others, he parted from the main force, which returned to Khartûm, and steamed on toward Dongola. After passing Abû Hamed — where he might have met a flying column from Korosko if that route had only been selected — his steamer struck a rock and could not be shoved off. He and his companions were now induced by promises of peace to accept the hospitality of Suleiman Wad Gamr, in whose country they were. Unarmed, they met him at the house of a blind man to negotiate for the purchase of camels to take them to Dongola; but, while there, they were basely set upon and murdered. The bodies of Stewart and Power, the only Englishmen besides Gordon south of Dongola, were thrown into the river as food for the crocodiles. The valuable journals of Gordon and Stewart fell into the hands of the rebels. Hussein, the stoker of the steamer, escaped death, and after a servitude of four months gave the first authoritative report of the massacre. Undoubted rumors, however, had reached the force advancing up the Nile early in October. The news added fresh fuel to the fire of English indignation. The government that

¹ A. Egmont Hake, *The Story of Chinese Gordon*, p. 180.

had shielded itself from the responsibility of Hicks's death could find no way of escape from the blame that now attached to it. Stewart had been appointed Gordon's first lieutenant, had been sent to the Sûdan for a specific purpose, and had then been abandoned to the fate that befell him. Those who had been wondering if the last act of the play were to be comedy or tragedy, questioned no longer. Alarming rumors were now circulated regarding Gordon. It was said that he had been captured by the Mahdi; then that Khartûm had fallen; and again that the mines had been exploded and had blown Gordon into the air. On the 14th of November, however, Wolseley received from Gordon a set of cipher despatches, dated November 4. Gordon lived; but he was in imminent danger. The Mahdi was within eight hours of Khartûm, which had provisions for about forty days. Five steamers had gone from Khartûm to Metemneh to await the expected relief. These facts were kept from the public, which only knew that Gordon was alive.

The beginning of the new year found Lord Wolseley still working his tedious way up the Nile. The apathy that had followed long-continued impatience in England was dispelled, early in January, by a very explicit telegram from Lord Wolseley to the Prince of Wales. His lordship announced, with something of a theatrical air, that he would enter Khartûm on the 24th of January. The public confidence in Wolseley's promises was great; for he had always had a way of announcing what he proposed to accomplish on a certain day, and of proceeding forthwith to carry out his undertaking to the letter. Since the battle of Tel el Kebir, however, the public had been deluded by so many vain plans, never carried to their execution, that almost any promise must need go begging for confidence. Still the general public was willing to trust for a last time, and the recent article in the London *Times* was forgotten, that called upon Mr. Gladstone to resign "in order to enable a new ministry, not crippled by personal engagements injurious to the true interests of England, to adopt a vigorous policy in Egypt, the colonies, and foreign affairs generally."¹

¹ *The Times*, January 5, 1885.

While Wolseley was hurrying his troops forward to Korti, which he had determined to make his base of operations, there were perplexing rumors afloat concerning the re-entrance of the Sublime Porte as an active factor in the Egyptian question. The announcement soon followed that the sultan was preparing to despatch troops to Sûakim in order to overcome Osman Digna, who was still zealously serving the Mahdi in that locality. Her Majesty's government at once resolved that Turkish troops should not be landed on the Red Sea littoral. But on what ground could England prevent it? It had never claimed the power of a protectorate; how, then, could it exercise such power? The answer was easily found in the history of the preceding years. The British government had never hesitated to act as the dominant power; it had only hesitated to assume the responsibility that must necessarily be associated with that power. It seemed now as if England would be forced finally to acknowledge herself the positive protector of Egypt, when suddenly the attention of the government and the people was diverted from diplomacy to the war operations in the Sûdan.

Having concentrated his forces at Korti, Lord Wolseley, on the 4th of January, ordered General Earle, with a force of about 2,500 men, to proceed to Berber, by way of the long bend in the Nile. He was to get possession of Abû Hamed and Berber, in order that the desert routes from those points might be made use of in case of evacuation. On the 8th of January, General Stewart, with a picked force of about 1,500 men, was despatched from Korti straight across the desert to Metemneh, there to meet the steamers that General Gordon had sent out from Khar-tûm. This desert rout was only about thirty miles shorter than the one from Korosko to Abû Hamed, which might have been taken in September. Four precious months would thus have been saved. All went well with General Stewart's desert journey, till he neared the wells of Abû Klea, less than twenty-five miles from Metemneh. He encamped near them on the 16th of January, and on the 17th his force was attacked by 10,000 rebels. His troops fought as Englishmen always fight; and the rebels, with all their superiority of numbers, were repulsed. The

English loss was sixty-five killed and nearly a hundred wounded. Among the former was the famous Colonel Burnaby, who made the wonderful "Ride to Khiva." He is said to have died "like a true British bull-dog, with his right hand clenched in death about the throat of the Arab whose spear was thrust through the Colonel's neck." On the 19th, a still more formidable force was encountered; but again the rebels were repulsed. General Stewart had received a wound which he would not admit was serious, but pushed on to Gûbat on the Nile, not attempting to force Metemneh, which was in the hands of the rebels. At Gûbat were Gordon's steamers and the inspiring message: "All right at Khartûm. Can hold out for years." It seemed as if fortune served the will of England. The enthusiasm that greeted the news of Stewart's victories and of Gordon's message was boundless. A confidence was begotten that made final success seem already within England's grasp. The world did not know then, as we do now, that the message was written for the enemy,¹ and that Gordon had sent word to Wolseley nearly two months before that he had provisions enough for about forty days. The Commander-in-Chief had received a later despatch, dated December 14, in which Gordon said: "Our troops in Khartûm are suffering from lack of provisions. . . . We want you to come quickly." But Wolseley had kept Gordon's peril a secret, only using the utmost haste — at the eleventh hour — to secure his release. The world, therefore, rejoiced at the news.

Several days were now fatally misspent. It was not till the 24th of January that Sir Charles Wilson started on Gordon's steamers for Khartûm. On the 28th, after having been assailed all along his journey by armed Arabs on the banks of the river, Colonel Wilson appeared in sight of Khartûm. Instead of the eager welcome he expected, he was met with a furious fusilade from all sides, and before him on the government house floated the Mahdi's colors. Khartûm had fallen, and Gordon was captured or killed. Assured of the terrible disaster, Wilson hastily beat a retreat. He lost both his steamers at the sixth cataract, and only reached Gûbat after a most perilous adventure, being

¹ A. Egmont Hake, *Story of Chinese Gordon*, p. 200.

rescued from his dangerous situation by Lord Charles Beresford. But on the way down he had learned from the natives that Khartûm had fallen on the 26th. Gordon had been lost by two days. With fateful instinct he had written, October 13 : "It is, of course, on the cards that Khartûm is taken under the nose of the expeditionary force, which will be *just too late*." ¹ It probably never will be known just how he died ; and it matters little which story we believe. All agree that Faraz Pasha treacherously betrayed the city and that the martyr died like a hero.

To the western world the news of the fall of Khartûm was like a thunderbolt from a clear sky. At the very moment of rejoicing, fortune and faith were crushed. The calamity marked an epoch. The press and the people demanded that from that day the great statesman, whose policy had always been peace, should bear the arms he was loath to assume and slow to use in a strong and swift campaign of revenge, or make way for a ministry of war. The public patience and forbearance were strained beyond their utmost tension. The final catastrophe was the natural outcome of all the mistakes of England in Egypt. Since the suppression of Arabi's rebellion there had been little to admire in the British policy. Forced to remain and protect her own interests, and guard with jealous care the water-way to India, England hesitated to accept, and endeavored to shirk at every step, the responsibility that her power and position had forced upon her. It may be true that the British interference in Egypt was not of Mr. Gladstone's choosing ; but, when he accepted the control of the government, he accepted the situation in Egypt as it was, and not as he might wish it to be. Since his accession, in 1880, it had never been possible or desirable for England to withdraw her influence from Egypt ; but Mr. Gladstone could not look that fact in the face. After Arabi's downfall, in 1882, the British Parliament, press, and public urged their government to declare its policy or intentions in Egypt ; but they urged in vain. Nothing was ever decided till the exigencies or the disasters of the moment rendered ac-

¹ Journals, p. 178.

tion absolutely imperative. This halting policy had resulted in disaster, slaughter, and the final tragedy.

Scarcely had the world recovered from the first great shock of Gordon's death, when it was announced that General Earle had been killed in an engagement with the rebels, February 9, while pressing toward Abû Hamed; and then came the sad news that General Stewart's wound had proved fatal, February 16. Perhaps Wolseley began to have some concern for his own life. At all events, he lost no time in gathering together the outlying portions of his army. The perilous desert journey from Gûbat to Korti was safely made; and the river expedition that General Earle had commanded, was recalled. With all possible expedition the army retreated to Dongola, where it took up its quarters for the summer. Such was the end of the lamentable failure to rescue Gordon.

The cry for vengeance with which England was still ringing had to be recognized in some way. To counteract the humiliation of Wolseley's retreat, active operations had been undertaken on the Red Sea littoral. Troops were personally reviewed by the queen, and then ordered to the seat of war in the eastern Sûdan. It was declared that the government had determined to open the route to Berber and then to "smash" the Mahdi. But the most barren, desolate, and difficult of desert routes was still guarded by Osman Digna, the lieutenant of the Mahdi, whose forces had more than once carried destruction into the English camp. It was a difficult task the government set the English soldiers, to accomplish that journey of two hundred and fifty miles amid all the natural perils of the desert and with hostile hordes ready to swoop down upon them from every mountain along the way. But the accomplishment was beyond the intention of the government. A show of activity was made at Sûakim with soldiers and railway plant, until Mr. Gladstone had recovered from the effect of the vote of censure that so nearly¹ cost him his government when Parliament reassembled at the end of February. The beleaguered gar-

¹ The vote was carried in the upper House by a large majority, but lost in the lower House by the narrow majority of fourteen.

rison of Kassala was sending piteous appeals for help that were like the old cries from Khartûm. But aside from this the call for war was still inspired of vengeance only. Vengeance, however, is a quality that Mr. Gladstone's character—to his honor, be it said—has never known. Supported by a narrow majority, he turned his thoughts from the stinging failures of his policy abroad to the grand purposes of his life-work at home. The cry for vengeance never found an echo in the sand hills of the desert, while at home it had dwindled, within two months, to the murmur of a jeering and deriding opposition.

The epilogue of the tragedy, however, might better have been spoken after a farce. All the irony of an eighteenth century comedy was contained in Lord Wolseley's farewell address, in which he announced the withdrawal of the British troops from the Sûdan and highly praised "the conduct of all the departments of the service during the campaign." One asks to whom and to what he issued the farewell. Was it to the shades of Hicks Pasha, of the Stewarts, of Earle, of Gordon, and of the brave British soldiers whose whitening bones would make the desert paths plainer to the caravans of war or peace that should thereafter wind across the sands of the Sûdan? Or was it to the rival Mahdis—for since the death of Gordon the glory of Mehemet Ahmed had been dimmed by the claims of a Falser Prophet than himself—who were threatening a greater destruction among believers than had been accomplished by the trained troops of a superior civilization? Perhaps Osman Digna heard the address, or from the hills about Sûakim, where he and his band had so successfully harassed and hindered the invaders, watched the withdrawal. He must have smiled—for he was a European, and cannot be supposed to have acquired the disposition of the Mussulmans with their faith—as he looked down upon the few miles of the incomplete and deserted railway.

And yet the withdrawal from the Sûdan in May, 1885, was the wisest act of Mr. Gladstone's Sûdanese policy. Gordon himself had said: "If Khartûm falls, then go quietly back to Cairo, for you will only lose men and spend money uselessly in carrying on the campaign."¹ The troops could not go as far

¹ Journals, p. 179. (October 13.)

as Cairo, however, for the Egyptian boundary needed to be guarded. The frontier garrison was placed at Wady Halfa. This was the proper limit; for it brought Korosko, the terminus of the desert route, under the protection of the Nile patrol of steamers, and was itself within easy reach of reinforcements from Assûan. The natural barriers of protection, the long cataract south of Wady Halfa, and the six days' desert guarding Korosko, make the present Egyptian garrisons practically impregnable. And so the Sûdan was left to its inherent anarchy. But first England offered naïvely to let Turkey set up a government there. Turkey declined with thanks. The Sûdan pays no tribute. The Porte cares little for the mere honor of being acknowledged suzerain; its solicitude is for something more tangible. So long as there is no interference with her tribute prerogatives, Turkey will make no attempts to establish her claim of authority, by sending troops or treasure to Egypt or the Sûdan. After Turkey refused to act the part of what seemed cat's paw to England, Italy became clamorous for the distinction. But her ambition never has extended beyond the Red Sea littoral. The Sûdanese have thus been left practically to themselves since May, 1885. They have begun to prepare their country for the ultimate reception of civilization much more effectually than an external force could have done. The Mahdi and Osman Digna are dead. Intestine strifes among different factions have so wasted the resources of the land that the misery of the people is as great, probably, or greater than in the days when an Egyptian pasha was governor-general. Perhaps the people already look back upon the time when Gordon first ruled them, as the period of their happiest prosperity. It is not an impossibility that the dreams of Sir Samuel Baker may yet come true, in which he pictures to himself the upper Nile region as freed from the curse of the slave-traffic, as accessible to the outer world, and as bringing forth the bounties of tropical increase. Before this utopian result is secured, however, the influence of the Anglo-Saxon will again be needed.

We must now take a final look at Egypt proper. The khédive's government played a small part in the game that cost

England so dearly. Their chief concern was to keep their head above the ever-flowing, never-ebbing tide of debts. It cannot be said that they succeeded. It has been seen to what extremities Lord Northbrook was obliged to go in order to relieve the financial embarrassments of 1884, and now the Powers were incensed at his action. By way of conciliation, a financial scheme was drawn up to which the Powers, in International Convention, agreed, and which was presented to Parliament in March, 1885. The agreement guaranteed a loan of £9,000,000, to be used in lifting the Egyptian debt, the loan to be liquidated by the repayment of £325,000 annually, and this sum to be considered the first charge against the Egyptian revenues until the entire loan is lifted. The administrative expenditure of the khédive's government was limited to the sum of £5,237,000. Any surplus over the year's receipts was to be paid over to the Commissioners of the Public Debt for the purpose of making good an imposed deduction of five per cent from the interest on the loan and an imposed reduction of one-half per cent from the interest on the Suez canal shares held by England. The customary provision was included in the agreement, that extends taxation to all foreigners resident in Egypt. This provision had often enough been endorsed; it must now be executed. The Egyptians would then believe that the Giaours were not without a sense of honor. The agreement further provided, as always, for an "exhaustive investigation into the revenue-earning capacity of Egypt." The final provision of importance was that if at the end of two years it should be found that a continued deduction from interest on the coupons is necessary, the khédive should summon an international commission like that of 1880, to make general inquiry into Egyptian finances. The agreement seemed to have been drawn up in the interest of Egypt.

The two years of probation are nearly ended. In the interval Egypt has prospered and the financial scheme has worked well. The Commissioners of the Public Debt now announce¹ that the surplus after the payment of the November coupon of the

¹ *The London Times*, October 26, 1886.

unified debt "will suffice to make good any deficiency in the unassigned revenues and to reimburse the five per cent coupon tax levied during the last two years, besides leaving a balance, which under the convention will be equally divided between the *Caisse* and the Ministry of Finance." There will thus be no occasion for the khédive to summon an international commission. The comparative prosperity that has secured this result is due to the peaceful state of affairs in Egypt and to the more than ordinarily productive yield of the soil. The cotton crop has of late recalled the days when Ismail was khédive. Then, too, there has been a discovery within the boundaries of Egypt that may afford a better solution of the financial problem than all the agreements and investigations of European Powers can ever secure. Egypt has been absolutely unproductive of fuel; but there is a promise that the newly found petroleum will be made to answer the purposes of the imported coal. The new fuel has already been introduced by way of experiment on the Alexandria and Cairo railway.

There is one step remaining to be taken in Egypt that will do more than anything else toward securing the final settlement of the conflict between East and West. England must assume the burdens of her authority. She can never loose her hold of the country that guards the waterway to India. She is jealous of her power. When her attention was concentrated on the Afghan imbroglio in May, 1885, France thought it an opportune moment to regain her lost prestige in Egypt. But if England's attention was diverted for the moment, her representatives were not without power in Egypt. M. de Freycinet failed as utterly then as he did in the day of Arabi. The complications that have arisen lately over the Bulgarian troubles have again pushed France to the front as the opponent of English domination in Egypt. Russia, of course, with her grasp upon Bulgaria and her eye ever on the Bosphorus, is inciting France to this opposition. The French press is filled with stories of the misrule that is prevalent in Egypt. But France will circulate stories reflecting on the policy of England in Egypt until she forgets the circumstances of her own retire-

ment from responsibility. England has the single-handed control, and she means to maintain it. The welfare of Egypt rests on this resolution. Many people, who claim the divine right of judging the motives of an action and who fail to see so far as its results, urge that England is actuated solely by selfishness and the greed of power in asserting her control in Egypt, and that she is merely fortifying herself against that certain day when some protruding arm of Russian territory shall reach a southern sea. They say she makes the interest of Egypt secondary to her own; therefore, the power of England in Egypt must be resisted. Granting even that these are England's motives, cannot the same wind blow good to both countries? Is it a sound principle that what benefits one country must injure another? The fact is, that the extension of the dominion of Great Britain, while bringing glory to the nation itself, is for the interest of the civilized world. The Anglo-Saxon influences of Christianity and civilization are the best known. As opposed to Russian influences they are both iconoclastic and creative. The Russian empire extends its dominion, and there appears no sign of assimilation; the subjugated people pays its tribute and its homage, but retains its language, its religion, and its customs. England, on the other hand, makes her furthestmost territory British in reality as well as in name; ignorance, superstition, and savagery melt away under contact with the Anglo-Saxon influence. That England, in spite of all her mistakes, has had a beneficent influence upon Egypt, no one can doubt who compares the civilization under Mehemet Ali with that of to-day. This would be the trite assertion of an accepted fact, were it not for the stupendous financial follies of Ismail. The storm raged in his day; and the gloom still hangs over Egypt. It can only be swept away by the protecting arm of England. She has shrunk all along from the final step of annexation; but she remains the virtual suzerain of Egypt. A truly anomalous condition of affairs is presented to view. England has the control; Egypt bears the burdens; and Turkey reaps the profit. The rôle of Turkey is quite superfluous. She has never yielded to Egypt the slightest return for the tribute she has regularly

exacted and the troops she has occasionally employed. It is true that she granted Ismail the title of khédive for an enormous consideration; but if Mehemet Ali had been supported in his just struggle for independence in 1842, the ruler in Egypt might call himself khédive, emperor, or mikado, without the expenditure of a single piaster. It is not yet too late for severance. The vast sum of money paid by way of tribute to the Porte may be considered duly to have purchased for Egypt her independence of Turkey. This violation of contract could not be effected without a struggle. But with England's support it could result only in one way. Once accomplished, Egypt might yet shake off the shackles of debt, and the relations of the great Power of the West to Egypt in the East might be settled without conflict.

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